CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

5   1.   A method for processing image data comprising:

comparing image data representative of a plurality of images;

characterizing a level of change of the image data from one image to the next in the plurality of images; and

presenting a viewer with indicia of relative levels of change of the image data for

10   the plurality of images.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of images represent a same subject of interest at different points in time.

15   3.   The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of images represent spatially adjacent subject matter at generally the same point in time.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein the level of change is characterized by analyzing absolute differences between adjacent images in the plurality of images.

20   5.   The method of claim 4, wherein the absolute differences are analyzed on a pixel-by-pixel basis.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein characterizing a level of change of the

25   image data includes characterizing change due to noise in the image data, and not including changes due to noise in the presented indicia.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the presented indicia include a graphical representation of progressive change between images of the plurality of images.

30

8.   The method of claim 7, comprising presenting the viewer with a virtual tool for navigating through the plurality of images based upon the progressive change between the images.

5

9.   A method for processing image data comprising:

comparing image data representative of a plurality of images; and

generating a scout navigation tool by characterizing a level of change of the image data from one image to the next in the plurality of images, the scout navigation tool including a graphical representation of progressive change between images of the

10   plurality of images and a virtual tool for navigating through the plurality of images based upon the level of change.

10.   The method of claim 9, comprising displaying the scout navigation tool on a viewable screen.

15

11.   The method of claim 10, comprising receiving inputs from a viewer via the scout navigation tool and displaying images from the plurality of images based upon the inputs.

20   12.   The method of claim 10, comprising receiving inputs from a viewer via the scout navigation tool and storing images from the plurality of images based upon the inputs.

13.   The method of claim 10, comprising receiving inputs from a viewer via

25   the scout navigation tool and processing images from the plurality of images based upon the inputs.

14.   The method of claim 10, comprising displaying the scout navigation tool adjacent to an image viewing region of the viewable screen.

30

15.   The method of claim 9, wherein the plurality of images represent a same subject of interest at different points in time.

16.   The method of claim 9, wherein the plurality of images represent spatially adjacent subject matter at generally the same point in time.

17.   The method of claim 9, wherein the level of change is characterized by analyzing absolute differences between adjacent images in the plurality of images.

18.   The method of claim 17, wherein the absolute differences are analyzed on a pixel-by-pixel basis.

19.   The method of claim 18, wherein characterizing a level of change of the image data includes characterizing change due to noise in the image data, and not including changes due to noise in the presented indicia.

20.   A system for processing image data comprising:

a memory device for storing image data;

processing circuitry configured to compare image data representative of a plurality of images and to generate a scout navigation tool by characterizing a level of change of the image data from one image to the next in the plurality of images, the scout navigation tool including a graphical representation of progressive change between images of the plurality of images and a virtual tool for navigating through the plurality of images based upon the level of change.

21.   The system of claim 20, comprising a user viewable display for displaying the scout navigation tool and images from the plurality of images based upon use inputs.

22.   The system of claim 21, comprising a user input device for selection of images for viewing from the plurality of images via manipulation of the virtual tool.

23.   The system of claim 22, wherein the virtual tool includes a slider displayed adjacent to the graphical representation.

24.   A system for processing image data comprising:

means for comparing image data representative of a plurality of images;

mean for characterizing a level of change of the image data from one image to the next in the plurality of images; and

means for presenting a viewer with indicia of relative levels of change of the image data for the plurality of images.

25.   A system for processing image data comprising:

means for comparing image data representative of a plurality of images; and

means for generating a scout navigation tool by characterizing a level of change of the image data from one image to the next in the plurality of images, the scout navigation tool including a graphical representation of progressive change between images of the plurality of images and a virtual tool for navigating through the plurality of images based upon the level of change.

26.   A computer program for processing image data comprising:

at least one computer readable medium; and

code stored on the at least one computer readable medium encoding routines for comparing image data representative of a plurality of images, characterizing a level of change of the image data from one image to the next in the plurality of images, and presenting a viewer with indicia of relative levels of change of the image data for the plurality of images.

27.   A computer program for processing image data comprising:

at least one computer readable medium; and

code stored on the at least one computer readable medium encoding routines for comparing image data representative of a plurality of images, and generating a scout navigation tool by characterizing a level of change of the image data from one

image to the next in the plurality of images, the scout navigation tool including a graphical representation of progressive change between images of the plurality of images and a virtual tool for navigating through the plurality of images based upon the level of change.

5